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**Arizona Game and Fish Department****NEWS RELEASE**

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Information needed in deer poaching

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. -- The Arizona Game and Fish Department is asking for the public's help in finding a poacher that killed a large antlered mule deer buck sometime during the week of Dec. 14. The poaching occurred on the Arizona Strip, which is in northern Arizona along the Arizona-Utah border.

Evidence discovered during a field investigation shows that the deer was shot in the head, which was then removed and hidden in a nearby tree. The poacher only removed some of the meat from the carcass and left the rest to waste. There were no deer hunting seasons open at the time the poaching occurred.

"This is a blatant example of poachers' disrespect for wildlife and the laws and seasons that are established to protect our wildlife resources," says Wildlife Manager Luke Thompson. "We need help from the public in catching the poacher. Maybe you were in the area recently or recall hearing about this large 34-inch-wide mule deer buck. Please remember, poaching of wildlife is considered stealing from our wildlife resources."

Anyone with information about this poaching can call the department's Operation Game Thief Hotline toll free at (800) 352-0700. Callers may be eligible for a reward of up to \$1,250 for information leading to the arrest of the violator(s) in this case. All calls may remain confidential upon request.

To learn more about Operation Game Thief and other pending cases, visit www.azgfd.gov/thief.

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alternative format, please contact the Game and Fish Deputy Director as listed above or by calling TTY at 1-800 367-8939.